

Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

***The Stages of Professional Development: A Resource for ALL Teachers Responsible for
the Achievement of Students with Disabilities
Executive Summary
OCTOBER 2009***

The Stages of Professional Development: A Resource for ALL Teachers Responsible for the Achievement of Students with Disabilities document was developed in 2005-2006 to serve as a tool that could be used for self assessment and monitoring a teacher's growth in implementing instructional practices that are effective with students with disabilities. In addition, the tool can also be used to assist mentors and teachers in the self assessment process and the creation of professional development plans.

Development of the document was undertaken in direct response to the Maryland State Improvement Grant (MSIG) goals to increase the number of highly qualified special educators (met partially through mentoring and coaching) and to improve the performance of students with disabilities on State accountability measures. It was developed by a team of consultants hired by the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services.

The Stages of Professional Development document contains the following information: research and review of other continuums of professional development, a continuum of professional development based upon the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles/standards for teachers teaching students with disabilities, an outline and action plan for in-service training, and a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the stages of professional development. Indicators were developed for each INTASC standard, and each indicator was divided into five developmental STAGES with each indicator matching Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. In an on-going cycle of professional development, the teacher conducts a self-assessment of his/her instructional skills using the document, analyzes the results and uses the information to create a professional development plan. The teacher monitors progress on the standards and indicators and updates the professional development plan as growth occurs and future focus areas are identified.

A utilization guide and a self-assessment form were developed to accompany the Stages of Professional Development document. The Stages document has been presented at national conferences including Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Center for Teacher Quality (Council of Chief State School Officers), and the Teacher Education Division (TED) of Council for Exceptional Children.

Review of the Stages document included national, state and local stakeholders. National level reviewers included Dr. Margaret Crutchfield, Associate Vice President for Program Review, NCATE, Dr. Joanne Cashman, Director National Association of Accreditation, NASDSE, Dr. Denise Stewart, Consultant/Evaluator, State Improvement Grants, and Dr. Kathleen Paliokas, Director, INTASC. Reviewed at the state level by Maryland State Department of Education staff, a group of administrators, consultants, higher education faculty, representatives from general and special education teachers and preservice teachers' interns.

Revisions were made to the Stages document following the reviews, and the resource was piloted with mentors and new special educators in the 2006-2007 academic year. The review process included a review of standards and indicators, self assessment and analysis of results, the completion of a Professional Development Plan, monitoring of progress and celebration of successes. The feedback from mentors and mentees was used to guide further revision that resulted in the current date document. The document was piloted with teachers, mentors, and mentees from general education and special education during the 2007-2008 academic year. In addition to the review of the content of the document, reviewers were asked to complete a survey on the usefulness of the document in their professional development and on the ease of use.

The results of the survey are currently being used to develop an online version of the Stages of Professional Development document. Upon completion, the online document will be available to all mentors and teachers throughout the State of Maryland and other interested parties.